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According to Father Denifle, the archives of the Vatican contain information of the same sort concerning the religious establishments of Bohemia in the time of the Hussite wars and those of Scotland during the border conflicts. Certainly this and the texts relating to other European countries in this period ought to be published. The effects of war and pestilence contributed so largely to the decline of the church in France in the fifteenth century that one is naturally led to inquire whether, in other parts of Europe as well, the disorders of the age were not responsible for some of the evils which are usually attributed to the inherent defects of the mediæval ecclesiastical system. Be this as it may, we certainly need much fuller knowledge than we have of the conditions which prevailed under this system in parish, monastery, and hospital. Every year brings new material from local archives, in the form of visitations, bishops' registers, court records, account books, and the like; but there is also much of value at Rome, and if we are ever to understand the mediæval church, we must draw largely upon documents such as Father Denifle has here given us, published, as he edits them, without suppression and without apology.

CHARLES H. HASKINS.

*Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam.* By EPHRAIM EMERTON, Ph.D., Winn Professor of Ecclesiastical History in Harvard University. ["Heroes of the Reformation" Series.] (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1899. Pp. xxvi, 470.)

THE reviewer of Professor Emerton's volume on Erasmus is beset at the start by a temptation so serious that he must claim credit for even partially resisting it. "Why should Erasmus be ranked among the 'Heroes of the Reformation'?" This question, which immediately leaps to the lips, might be debated at such length that little space would be left for the discussion of any other topic. We pass it by, with two comments only. Professor Emerton has a witty reference in his preface to the seeming contradiction and, secondly, the title of a comprehensive series can hardly be accurate in all its applications. We shall not cavil at the inclusion of Erasmus among the "Heroes," nor even grudge Cranmer his place in the same list. The main fact is that this study is restricted by the nature of the general scheme into which it enters. It is less an independent sketch of character, pursuits, purposes and results than a striking essay on one aspect of a many-sided life. Professor Emerton has shown more conscience than is displayed by the majority of contributors to works of literary co-operation. He conforms to the aim of the enterprise, and does not go beyond it either for the sake of airing a hobby or for mere display. He is concentrated, direct and effective.

Why is Erasmus viewed with admiration by so many persons at the present day? Since the seventeenth century his books have been read by the learned alone. He founded no sect or school. He was not a man of daring or of uncommon generosity. To be sure, he enjoys a

reputation for humor, but though Bailey's translation of the *Colloquies* was reprinted not many years ago, it can be bought cheaply from the second-hand dealers. Yet who has not heard the remark thrown across a dinner-table: "If I had lived in the Reformation, I should have sided with Erasmus?" And such speeches do not come simply from those who have but a general knowledge of the period. A scholar like Charles Beard can say: "Nothing can well be more unjust than to find fault with Erasmus for not being Luther, or even for unwillingness to place himself at Luther's side." Indeed, while Erasmus may not yet have joined the "Heroes," he has, in an age of tolerance, become one of the most popular of historic figures.

Upon the rosy view which invests Erasmus with the wit of More, the calmness of Castellion and the disinterestedness of Spinoza, Professor Emerton's book will come with a shock. We have said that it is not primarily a character sketch. "Its function," runs the preface, "is to deal with Erasmus as a factor in the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century. With the very peculiar and often elusive personality of the man it has to do only in so far as it serves to suggest an explanation of his attitude towards the world-movement of his time." Still Erasmus was fifty years old at the date of the Wittenberg theses. His habits, methods and opinions were, broadly speaking, fixed, and his relations with the Lutheran Revolution were determined by his temperament. Professor Emerton is not in the strict sense a biographer but he must, perforce, give up a great part of his space to personality. And it is his revelation of faults, foibles and insincerities which will produce the deepest impressions.

Professor Emerton judges Erasmus not by the opinion of his contemporaries—still less of later writers—but by his own works, and most of all by his letters. It must be admitted that the truth is not always obtainable from this vast bulk of correspondence. For instance, Erasmus often calls Paris "that Gallic dungheap" and in the *Colloquies* assails the Collège Montaigu most bitterly. But when Budaeus invites him to join the circle of scholars which Francis I. is forming, he remarks, without committing himself to an acceptance: "I will only say at present that Paris was ever dear to me on many accounts." But while Professor Emerton shows that the word of Erasmus cannot be trusted where the writer is an interested party, a careful comparison of the letters will yield the means of testing his straightforwardness, honesty of friendship, gratitude, independence and other essential traits of character. Such was the bitterness of the Reformation age, such its rashness of invective that a sympathizer with Erasmus might be little moved by the attacks of Luther, Scaliger or even Ulrich von Hutten. Of all possible blows at his reputation the most damaging one is Professor Emerton's use of the "deadly parallel."

Admirers have never denied Erasmus's lack of physical courage, but many will grieve to know that he is now made out by the revelation of his own words a liar, a self-advertiser, an ingrate, and a persistent beggar

if not a "sponge." Proof of shortcomings is not Professor Emerton's real aim, and so the accumulated illustrations which he gives must be passed over. We will only say that Erasmus could tax the patience of a generous and true friend like Colet (p. 196). We now come to the central question of the book. Having examined the nurture and devious methods of Erasmus, it must be asked, "How did he view the moral and religious questions of his revolutionary age? How far was he intellectually and personally honest in his dealings with Reformers and Romanists?"

Professor Emerton does not, we judge, doubt the existence in Erasmus of a true reforming instinct. He distinguishes between a best self and one which, by implication, is considerably less than best. The inferior Erasmus praises Leo X. during his lifetime but slights his memory during the pontificate of Adrian VI. The same man when stirred by his higher impulse writes the *Enchiridion*, incurs blame of great churchmen by the *Praise of Folly* and, more important still, edits the *Greek Testament*. "It was clear to him that his age had wandered far from the foundations of these [existing church] institutions. His remedy was to point out to men how widely they had erred, and to show them once more in plain and direct language the true foundations of a Christian life." He avoided a quarrel with institutions, not simply because he dreaded the consequences to himself, but because he believed that the root of the evil lay in wicked men rather than in the systems with which they are connected. Fiercely as he assailed monks, he could praise the life of contemplation and admit the existence of many good Christians among the regular orders. Long before the appearance of Luther he had acquired the habit of looking at things from every point of view, and regarded particular circumstances with the acuteness which the Jesuits soon after put into their casuistry. What Professor Emerton calls "the Erasmusian If" was not developed through a sense of time-serving in the early days of the Reformation. It is traceable to original disposition, long habit and mature conviction.

Erasmus refrained from accepting the advice of Albert Dürer and did not secure the martyr's crown. The most that Professor Emerton can say on his behalf is that he followed the law of his nature and intellectual temper. Accordingly, he was not, in the main, dishonest. But was he praiseworthy? For Professor Emerton's opinion at this point we must turn to his comment on Hutten's *Expostulatio*: "Although called out by a personal attack, the *Expostulatio* keeps itself throughout on higher than personal grounds. It is not an apology for Hutten; it is a fierce outburst of honest indignation against a man who seemed to be throwing away a noble mind and conspicuous gifts through lack of courage and simple honesty. . . . If Hutten made the mistake which so many have made since his time of asking from Erasmus a kind of service for which he was by nature unfitted, it was a mistake which honors him who made it. The time for balancing good and evil had gone. If anything was to be done, it must be by the united action of all who were in substantial agreement upon the great essential questions of the hour." Professor

Emerton does not judge Erasmus, after 1517, by a standard of ideal excellence to the neglect of his previous career and sentiments. He only laments that he should not have risen to the height of his chances. Incidentally he did much for the Reformation, but with greater robustness of soul—not body—he might have done so much more!

We have tried to define Professor Emerton's attitude towards two or three of the main problems which are raised by mention of Erasmus's name. A word should now be said regarding the palpable merits of this study. One must not only have steeped himself in the ten folios of the Leyden edition before he writes of Erasmus. He needs clearness of thought, a systematic knowledge of the Reformation period, and a ready wit. Professor Emerton possesses the qualifications which have just been mentioned to a quite remarkable degree. His lightness of touch is equally unusual and attractive in its application to such a theme. Law and theology are not supposed to be the two most vivacious subjects in the world, but Madame du Deffand could criticize Montesquieu's masterpiece in the phrase, "de l'esprit sur les lois." One does not slight Professor Emerton's erudition in saying that he has written of the part which Erasmus took in the Reformation with a brightness which is due to Erasmus and which is seldom seen in treatises on the Reformation.

*Calendar of Letters and State Papers (Spanish) relating to English Affairs.* Vol. IV. Elizabeth, 1587-1603. Edited by MARTIN A. S. HUME. (London: Printed for Her Majesty's Stationery Office by Eyre and Spottiswoode. 1899. Pp. lxxviii, 782.)

THE documents in this volume are, the editor informs us, chiefly derived from "the correspondence and reports of Spanish ambassadors, agents and other officers, existing in the Archives at Simancas and amongst the papers abstracted therefrom, and now preserved in the Archives Nationales in Paris, with the addition of a few documents from the British Museum and other national depositories." In nearly every case the original MS. has been transcribed by the editor's own hand and care has been taken "to retain almost literally everything of importance likely to interest students of English history." The reports of Mendoza on English affairs, less direct and doubtless less valuable since his expulsion from England, cease altogether in the spring of 1591, the year in which his stormy life ended, so that the "invaluable and copious Spanish diplomatic correspondence, which has done so much to illuminate English Tudor history, was practically suspended from 1590 to 1603." The documents relating to the closing years of Elizabeth's reign, though of great importance, yet lack, as Major Hume complains, "the continuity and completeness which characterize the correspondence up to the end of 1590."

It is but justice to call attention to the cleverness and life of Major Hume's translations and paraphrases, to the helpfulness of the footnotes and to the energy and patience required to select, translate and edit the enormous number of documents in the four volumes of this Elizabethan